

No no no! or Yes yes yes? A Lesson on Discipline Playgroup #4

Materials Needed

- 3x5 card for each member of your playgroup
- Pens and/or pencils

Handouts

- Discipline, Consequences and Time Out

Introduction

Pass out a 3x5 card. Have each mother write one word that describes what the word discipline means. Gather the cards then read what they say.

Explain that discipline includes teaching, helping, and learning. Discipline is not punishment; rather it is teaching a child how to behave. Discipline includes offering choices, examples, and reinforcement for good behavior.

Ask parents to think of things that they would like their child to have in ten to fifteen years. Explain that we can think of children like small seeds who one day will grow up to be large trees. We as parents have the responsibility to plant them in proper soil and keep them growing in the right way. We have to provide nurture and love (water and sunlight) and also provide some guideposts to make sure they grow up straight and strong. It takes a lot of work, but we share in the pride of these beautiful trees when they are all grown and flourishing on their own. This is what child guidance or discipline is about.

Lesson Plan

Lesson Objectives

- Know what to expect of children based on age
- Understand the different tools that can be used for child guidance during difficult behavior

It is important to understand what we can expect from our children. At first our children need a lot of care, just like a tree that has just been planted. As the tree grows bigger it needs less and less supervision and control. At first we provide some guideposts around the tree so that it doesn't start growing at a slant, then when the trunk is strong enough, we can remove them. This is just the way with children. We need to understand where they are in their development to understand what kind of care we need to give them. It is also important to understand where they are developmentally so that we know if we are expecting too much from them.

What to Expect of Young Children

Infants

1. Cry to get what they need and what they want
2. Are dependent on adults
3. Love to play with their food.
4. Grow rapidly
5. Get into everything -Sleep less as they grow
6. Learn by touching, tasting, smelling, seeing, and hearing
YOU CAN NOT SPOIL AN INFANT!

2-year olds

1. Are learning to be independent (say "No" many times)
2. Are possessive ("That's Mine")
3. Are noisy
4. Try to get their own way
5. Have a short memory
6. Can't make up their mind
7. Are pokey (play in food, dawdle)
8. Can't sit still

3-year olds

1. Try to please
2. Follow through on tasks fairly well
3. Accept suggestions
4. Can be reasoned with
5. Are attentive when spoken to, especially when called by name
6. Can make choices
7. Can talk enough to be understood
8. Haven't learned how to share yet

4-year olds

1. Want friends
2. Ask many questions
3. Tend to be bossy
4. Brag and stretch the truth
5. Tattle frequently
6. Talk a lot
7. Can learn to take turns
8. See themselves as the center of attention
9. Enjoy playing with made-up words
10. Say words that shock you

5-year olds

1. Are friendly with friends (usually) and parents
2. Are businesslike
3. Like to imitate grown-ups
4. Like to feel independent
5. Tattle on others
6. Enjoy dressing up

7. Can give their name and address
8. Are serious and demanding

It is important to know the characteristic behavior for each age. Often parents are irritated by children's behavior when they are only acting their age. This does not mean that the misbehavior should be ignored. Children need to be taught appropriate behavior. By understanding where the child is developmentally the parents can understand why their child is acting out and how they can help the child learn the right behavior.

Discipline needs to be in line with the child's age and abilities. Ask yourself: Are my demands reasonable for this age? Do I expect too much?

It is also important to understand a child's temperament. Not all forms of discipline will work the same way.

Tools for Child Guidance during Difficult Behavior

Redirection

- Many times a child can get easily caught up in the situation and begin to act out. It is important to learn how to remove the child from the stimuli and help them change their train of thought. This could be as easy as offering an alternative to the child. If you have to say "no" to something, a way to redirect is to offer something that the child can do.

Offer choices

- Offer two choices; too many can confuse and overwhelm the child. The choice can be between the proper behavior and the consequence of the inappropriate behavior. "You get to choose- Are you going to share your toy, or put it away?"

Validate

- It is important to validate the child's feelings. "I can see you are upset because you want the toy. It is a really neat toy."

State what the child should do

- Children need examples of what they need to do. It is important for parents to focus on what the child can and should do, rather than criticizing him for what he shouldn't do. "Touch the kitty gently" rather than "Don't hit the kitty!"

Offer solutions

- Most children have a difficult time seeing into the future. It is important for parents to offer clear solutions. When you have to say "no" give an explanation why, and find something you can say "yes" to. "I can't let you play outside because we have to leave for school soon and your clothes will get dirty. Tomorrow you do not have school so we can play outside tomorrow morning."

Give them words

- Many times children do not have the ability to express themselves or their feelings effectively. This often leads to acting out, crying, or hitting. Help them know what to say. For example, your child doesn't want to leave grandma's house and begins to cry. Tell your child, "Say, 'Good bye Grandma. I love you. Thank you for letting me play at your house. I will come back and visit soon.'"

Set expectations beforehand

- Make sure the child knows what is expected of him. “We are going into the store. We need to use our inside voices and stay close to mom. If you can do this then you can help me get things off the list and put them in the cart, but if we can’t act nicely in the store we will have to go home.”

Be Positive

- Positive reinforcement is our most powerful tool to boost our child’s self esteem as well as encourage them to do the right behavior. Parents need to focus on what the child does right. When parents must bring up something negative, try also to say five positive things to the child.

Demonstrate how to do it nice

- “Please touch softly. Let me show you.”
- “Puzzle pieces are not for throwing. Let’s put them in their place together.”
- “That’s mommy’s paper; look this is your paper. What are you going to draw?”

Activity

This activity is designed to help parents plan how they are going to handle situations with their child. They will have the opportunity to look back on situations and see what they did right and what they can improve upon for next time. Parents can work together to provide support and suggestions for problem behaviors.

- Have the parents share a recent situation in which their child presented a difficult behavior. .
- Role-play this situation.
 - Have the parent act as the child so they can see from the perspective of the child how this makes them feel.
- Finish up by having the parents offer suggestions for how future situations can be handled.

Suggested Reading

The Difficult Child: Expanded and Revised Edition

by Stanley Turecki & Leslie Tonner

Normal Children Have Problems, Too: How Parents Can Understand and Help

by Stanley Turecki & Sarah Wernick

The Discipline Book: How to Have a Better-Behaved Child from Birth to Age Ten

by Martha Sears & William Sears

Discipline: The Brazelton Way

by T. Berry Brazelton & Joshua D. Sparrow

References